

James Chung, Chris Kim, and James Lee

Theatre II (A block)

May 5th, 2010

Uncle Vanya

by Anton Chekhov

James Chung as Astroff

Chris Kim as Marina

James Lee as Voitski

Act I

(A country house on a terrace. In front of it a garden. In an avenue of trees, under an old poplar, stands a table set for tea, with a samovar, etc. Some benches and chairs stand near the table. On one of them is lying a guitar. A hammock is swung near the table. It is three o'clock in the afternoon of a cloudy day.)

(ASTROFF is walking up and down near MARINA.)

MARINA: *(Pouring some tea into a glass)* Take a little tea, my son.

ASTROFF: *(Takes the glass from her unwillingly)* Somehow, I don't seem to want any.

MARINA: Then will you have a little vodka instead?

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ASTROFF: No, I don't drink vodka every day, and besides, it is too hot now. *(A pause)* Tell me, nurse, how long have we known each other?

MARINA: *(Thoughtfully)* Let me see, how long is it? Lord--help me to remember. You first came here, into our parts--let me think--when was it? Sonia's mother was still alive--it was two winters before she died; that was eleven years ago--*(thoughtfully)* perhaps more.

ASTROFF: Have I changed much since then?

MARINA: Oh, yes. You were handsome and young then, and now you are an old man and not handsome any more. You drink, too.

ASTROFF: Yes, ten years have made me another man. And why? Because I am overworked. Nurse, I am on my feet from dawn till dusk. I know no rest; at night I tremble under my blankets for fear of being dragged out to visit some one who is sick; I have toiled without repose or a day's freedom since I have known you; could I help growing old? And then, existence is tedious, anyway; it is a senseless, dirty business, this life, and goes heavily. Every one about here is silly, and after living with them for two or three years one grows silly oneself: It is inevitable.

(Twisting his moustache) See what a long moustache I have grown. A foolish, long moustache.

Yes, I am as silly as the rest, nurse, but not as stupid; no, I have not grown stupid. Thank God,

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my brain is not addled yet, though my feelings have grown numb. I ask nothing, I need nothing, I love no one, unless it is yourself alone. *(He kisses her head)* I had a nurse just like you when I was a child.

MARINA: Don't you want a bite of something to eat?

ASTROFF: No. During the third week of Lent I went to the epidemic at MalitskoI: It was eruptive typhoid. The peasants were all lying side by side in their huts, and the calves and pigs were running about the floor among the sick. Such dirt there was, and smoke! Unspeakable! I slaved among those people all day, not a crumb passed my lips, but when I got home there was still no rest for me; a switchman was carried in from the railroad; I laid him on the operating table and he went and died in my arms under chloroform, and then my feelings that should have been deadened awoke again, my conscience tortured me as if I had killed the man. I sat down and closed my eyes--like this--and thought: will our descendants two hundred years from now, for whom we are breaking the road, remember to give us a kind word? No, nurse, they will forget.

MARINA: Man is forgetful, but God remembers.

ASTROFF: Thank you for that. You have spoken the truth.

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(Enter VOITSKI from the house. He has been asleep after dinner and looks rather dishevelled. He sits down on the bench and straightens his collar.)

VOITSKI: H'm. Yes. *(A pause)* Yes.

ASTROFF: Have you been asleep?

VOITSKI: Yes, very much so. *(He yawns)* Ever since the Professor and his wife have come, our daily life seems to have jumped the track. I sleep at the wrong time, drink wine, and eat all sorts of messes for luncheon and dinner. It isn't wholesome. Sonia and I used to work together and never had an idle moment, but now Sonia works alone and I only eat and drink and sleep. Something is wrong.

MARINA: *(Shaking her head)* Such a confusion in the house! The Professor gets up at twelve, the samovar is kept boiling all the morning, and everything has to wait for him. Before they came we used to have dinner at one o'clock, like everybody else, but now we have it at seven. The Professor sits up all night writing and reading, and suddenly, at two o'clock, there goes the bell! Heavens, what is that? The Professor wants some tea! Wake the servants, light the samovar! Lord, what disorder!

ASTROFF: Will they be here long?

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VOITSKI: A hundred years! The Professor has decided to make his home here.

MARINA: Look at this now! The samovar has been on the table for two hours, and they are all out walking!

VOITSKI: All right, don't get excited; here they come.

(Source: <http://afronord.tripod.com/plays/vanya.html>)